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#006/07

March 23, 2007

CMU Professor Honored as “Woman of Courage”

Chiang Mai University Assoc. Prof. Virada Somsawasdi was honored as a “Woman of Courage” by U.S. Consul General Beatrice Camp in recognition of her courage and leadership in advancing women’s rights. The ceremony was held March 20, 2007 in Chiang Mai.

Assoc. Prof. Virada was among women in 82 countries nominated by U.S. embassies for exceptional courage and leadership. She was selected for her sustained contributions to promoting the role of women in the political and economic process in Thailand and the region.

As the founder of the Women’s Studies Center at Chiang Mai University and as the President of the Foundation for Women, Law and Rural Development, Assoc. Prof. Virada has helped develop the capacity of women in the region, helping advance their leadership role in government, politics, administration, and the economy.

U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, in honor of International Women’s Day 2007, established the annual Award for International Women of Courage to recognize women around the world who have shown exceptional courage and leadership in advocating for women’s rights and advancement.

During the award ceremony, CG Camp praised Assoc. Prof. Virada’s leadership and contributions over many years to ensuring greater participation by women in the region.

Noting the celebration of International Women’s day two weeks earlier, CG Camp explained that the occasion “gives us a chance to remind the world that women are fundamental to the safety, security and prosperity of the world. Advancing democracy, prosperity, and security worldwide is not possible without the empowerment of women. If women cannot participate in the political process, there can be no real democracy. If women are deprived of economic opportunity, development is crippled. If women are not educated, they cannot pass knowledge to their children, and there is no true security for the next generation.”



Beatrice Camp presented the “Woman of Courage” award to Assoc. Prof. Virada Somsawasdi, President of the Foundation for Women, Law and Rural Development, standing with her father.

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